

Frequently Asked Questions

How does the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers acquire the land for the project?

It is the policy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to buy land only from willing sellers and not invoke the Government's right of condemnation on any land acquisition for the Mitigation Project.

After lands are acquired, will the sites be open to the public?

Yes, on Government owned property.

How will county and local governments recoup farmland tax losses?

While the Federal Government does not pay property tax on acquired land, it does provide payments in lieu of taxes to the states involved. More information on PILT can be found at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) web site at www.blm.gov/pilt.

How do I inquire about selling my land for the Mitigation Project?

Contact the Corps Project Manager (identified elsewhere in this newsletter) that is responsible for your state.

Participating Agencies

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



US Army Corps
of Engineers



Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation



Project Newsletter



Issue 1, August 2003

— An update for stakeholders —

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Visit the Mitigation Project on the internet at
www.nwk.usace.army.mil/projects/mitigation

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Site Development

The Overton Bottoms North (OBN) mitigation site is located 20 miles west of Columbia, MO at river miles 188 to 185. The site is bounded on the east side by Interstate 70. The OBN site consists of 1,687 acres of land. Until the land at OBN was purchased for the Mitigation Project, the area was primarily used for agricultural purposes. Site development has included the planting of native grasses and trees. Dike structures in the Missouri River have been modified to create shallow water habitat opportunities for native big river fishes. In 2000, the Corps designed and constructed a river chute at the OBN site. The chute will create opportunities for new aquatic habitat. The chute was constructed at higher elevations so that it is only inundated on a seasonal basis. In 2003, as part of an adaptive management process, the Corps has been coordinating with the USFWS to widen and deepen the channel so that the chute will receive water for longer periods of the year. The OBN site is managed by the USFWS as part of the Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge. The USFWS has implemented low maintenance operation plans for the area as well as monitoring efforts. OBN is available to the public for a variety of outdoor activities including hiking, fishing, bird watching, and hunting when in season. More information on the OBN site can be found at the project website below.



RECORD OF DECISION SIGNED FOR THE MISSOURI RIVER FISH AND WILDLIFE MITIGATION PROJECT

On June 12, 2003, Brigadier General David A. Fastabend signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project (Mitigation Project). Signing of the ROD authorized the Kansas City and Omaha Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to implement the preferred alternative described in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) published in March 2003. The preferred alternative increases the amount of land authorized for the Mitigation Project by 118,650 acres to a total of 166,750 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in the Missouri River floodplain of the four states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. Land will primarily be obtained through the acquisition of private land in fee title from willing sellers or the development of public land through donated easements. Habitat development and restoration activities would take place at acquired mitigation sites. In general, restored habitat types will include wetlands, bottomland forest, native prairie, and shallow water habitat consisting of chutes and side channels, backwater areas, and slack water. Shallow water habitat will be included in the 118,650 acres and would range from 7,000 to 20,000 acres. The purpose of the Mitigation Project is to restore fisheries and wildlife habitat that has been lost due to channelization of the Missouri River through the Corps' Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project (BSNP).

The Mitigation Project is located on the lower Missouri River, an area extending from Sioux City, Iowa to St. Louis, Missouri. The U.S. Congress originally authorized the Mitigation Project as part

of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (WRDA86). Under WRDA86, a total of 48,100 acres of land were authorized for acquisition from willing private landowners or through easements on public land. WRDA99 modified the Mitigation Project by authorizing acquisition and development of an additional 118,650 acres.

The Corps has estimated the modified Mitigation Project cost at \$740 million to \$1.3 billion over a 30-year period. The Kansas City District is managing the Mitigation Project, while the Omaha and Kansas City Districts are each responsible for site-specific projects in their districts. Each Corps district works with the state fish and wildlife agencies in Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do site-specific fish and wildlife habitat development. The Corps is responsible for operations and maintenance of mitigation sites, while the state agencies manage mitigation site natural resources.

As of 2002, the Corps has acquired 25,177 acres of the 29,900 acres authorized for land acquisition by WRDA86. Fish and wildlife habitat has been developed on 9,600 acres of those acquired lands. Of the 18,200 acres of existing public lands authorized for mitigation, easements have been obtained on 10,855 acres, and 3,100 acres of fish and wildlife habitat has been developed on these public lands. Cumulatively, the original Mitigation Project has restored and/or preserved approximately 10,000 acres of wetlands and approximately 8,000 to 10,000 acres of bottomland forest. Approximately 5,000 acres of the Missouri River floodplain have been reconnected to the river and 50 existing river structures have been modified to enhance shallow water habitat.

Visit the Mitigation Project on the internet at www.nwk.usace.army.mil/projects/mitigation